

Department of Labor and Industry
Code Administration and Inspection Services
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Inspection Guide for Commercial Vessels Used for Hire on Inland Waters of Minnesota

Please note:

This Inspection Guide is intended for use as a guideline only. It is not all inclusive. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (CAIS) assumes no responsibility for any errors or omissions.

For specific requirements consult:

The State of Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 183.375 - 183.62

The State of Minnesota Rules, Chapter 5225

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 33 and 46

The Officer in Charge of Marine Inspections (OCMI)

(Chief Boiler Inspector) or your Marine Inspector

SAFETY INSPECTIONS

Registration/Documentation: All vessels shall be properly registered and licensed with the State of Minnesota.

Pilot/Master's License: Boats for hire require a pilot license to operate. Current licenses shall be displayed in a conspicuous space near the operating station.

Total Persons Permitted: The total number of passengers and crew allowed on board is determined by the OCMI or the designated Marine Inspector and is listed on the current certificate of inspection. Newly built vessels shall have manufacturers registered capacity or letter of stability. If these documents are not available, a qualified marine surveyor or a Marine Inspector employed by CAIS shall perform a simplified, stability test on the vessel. Any increase in the total persons permitted or any design change that affects the length, draft, center of gravity or superstructure of the vessel will require notification to the OCMI, prior to any changes, and may require a simplified, stability test as described in CFR-46.

Personal Flotation Devices (PFD's): As a minimum, all boats shall have the proper number and size of type-1 PFD's (one adult PFD for each passenger and crew member, plus 10% of the total number of PFD's shall be child size PFD's) on board at all times. If more than 10% of the passengers are children, the vessel may not get underway until the proper number of child PFD's are on board. The PFD's shall have reflective tape and shall be properly marked with the name of the vessel. They shall be stowed in an easily accessible location that is marked Adult or Child PFD's. Prior to getting underway, all passengers shall be informed as to the storage location of the PFD's and the location of other safety equipment on board the vessel. (Fire extinguishers, First Aid Kit, flairs, etc.)

Fire Extinguishers: As a minimum, each vessel shall have 1 type B or C I for each operating station and 1 type B or C II for each engine. The fire extinguishers shall be USGC approved for marine use and recertified each year by an approved service company. When stored they shall be easily accessible with the locations marked.

VHF Radio: At all times, vessels shall have a VHF marine radio in good operating condition.

Navigational Lights: At all times, vessels shall have the required navigational lights and anchor lights in good operating condition.

Backfire Flame Arrestors: All vessels with inboard gas engines shall have backfire flame arrestors installed and in good operating condition.

Exhaust Manifolds: Exhaust manifolds and exhaust systems for inboard engines shall be water-cooled and USCG approved for marine use.

Bilge Pumps: At all times, vessels shall have automatic and manual bilge pumps in good operating condition. The number and size of the bilge pumps shall be determined in accordance with CFR-46 by the OCMI or the Marine Inspector. A visual indicator, to indicate automatic bilge pump operation, must be provided at each operating station.

High Level Bilge Alarm: All vessels 26 feet and above in length shall have a visual and audible alarm provided at the operating station to indicate high water levels in the bilges.

Mechanical Ventilation: All vessels shall have a natural and mechanical ventilation system installed to prevent the accumulation of flammable vapors in enclosed machinery or fuel storage areas. The mechanical ventilation must be operated prior to starting gasoline engines for the time sufficient to insure at least one complete change of air in the space served. A Ventilation Warning Placard shall be installed at the operating stations to instruct the operator to run the mechanical ventilation prior to starting engines in enclosed spaces.

Flammable Vapor Detection System: All vessels with enclosed machinery or fuel storage spaces shall have a flammable vapor detection system installed. This system must be operational for 30 seconds prior to engine startup and provide a visual and audible alarm at the operating station. Sensors shall be located above the expected bilge water level, in the lowest part of the machinery spaces and/or in the lowest part of enclosed spaces containing fuel tanks that are separate from machinery spaces.

Fuel Tanks: All fuel tanks shall be of metal construction and shall be designed to meet the requirements of CFR-46. All openings (except for a cleaning fitting) shall be located on the top of the tank. Fuel tanks shall be adequately supported and braced to prevent movement. Fuel tanks and fill connections shall be electrically bonded to a common ground. All fuel tanks shall be properly vented and have a flame screen or flame arrester located on the vent discharge.

Fuel Lines: Fuel lines, including pipe, tube and hose, must be USCG approved. Gasoline fuel lines shall be connected to the top of the fuel tank with a shutoff valve and equipped with anti-siphon protection.

Ring Life Buoy: All vessels shall have a ring life buoy with a lifeline attached. If the vessel is authorized to operate at night, a floating water light with a 3-6 foot lanyard must be attached to the ring life buoy with a corrosion resistant clip.

Distress Flairs: All vessels shall have three 3 red and three 3 orange distress flairs. Flairs shall be stored in a portable watertight container in an easily accessible location.

First Aid Kit: All vessels shall have a First Aid Kit and a First Aid Manual in good usable condition on board at all times. The kit and manual should be stowed in a watertight container that is marked "First Aid Kit" in an easily accessible location.

Electrical Installation: All wire, cable, distribution panels, switches and connectors must be USCG approved for marine use. All wiring for power or lighting circuits shall be boat cable or stranded copper wire No. 14 AWG or larger, and control or indicator circuits must be No. 22 AWG or larger and shall be properly supported. Wire shall have sufficient current carrying capacity for the circuit in which they are used and protected from the weather. Splices should be made in watertight boxes with a terminal block or other approved connector. Circuits must have a fuse or breaker for over current protection. (NOTE: Romex-type wire and twist on type wire nuts are not approved for use in marine applications!)

Batteries: All batteries shall be accessible for maintenance and removal. They should be securely strapped down to prevent movement and covered to prevent sparking. Connections to terminals shall be of the permanent-type connectors, spring clips or other temporary type connections are not approved.

Anchors with line: All boats shall have an anchor of suitable size with line attached on board at all times.

Horn: All vessels shall have a horn in good operating condition.

Maintenance Log: All vessels shall have a maintenance log listing the dates and times of all maintenance and repairs.

Passenger Log: All vessels shall have a passenger log listing the dates, times, number of passengers and a phone contact for each group. This log should be stored at the vessel homeport and may be used by emergency personnel to assist in rescue efforts in case of an accident or mishap.